

How to Organize a Dorm Room Closet From a Professional Organizer – 303 Magazine

Elyssa Gleeson, August 18, 2023

6-8 minutes

<https://303magazine.com/2023/08/how-to-organize-a-dorm-room-closet-from-a-professional-organizer/>

Moving into a dorm room can be very stressful. As you search through the mixed reviews of what other college students say you must have and what you can skip, the process becomes even more confusing. With an impossibly tiny room, trying to figure out how to organize a dorm room closet can become a daunting task. **Luckily, professionals are here to help.**

Tina Wand, owner of **Simply Organized by Tina**, is a **Colorado-based professional organizer who has been in the business of organization for over six years**. She has organized countless homes, kitchens and closets. Wand prides herself in creating a confidential, judge-free environment where people gain the opportunity to change their lives forever.

Today, Wand shared her advice as to how to make the most out of the closet in a dorm room.

The Packing Process



Photo courtesy of Pack Hacker

Before moving in, or even thinking about how to organize a dorm room, you must begin the dreaded packing process. Choosing what you believe to be essential can be incredibly difficult as it differs from person to person. **When deciding what to pack, Wand recommends asking yourself two short questions, “Do you use it? Do you need it?”**

The question **“Do you use it?”** allows people to take a step back and think about if they use this item frequently. More importantly, **Wand recommends that this question should be answered with a “yes” only if that product is in your current routine, or has been part of your everyday routine in the immediate past.** Think about an item such as gloves. When you’re packing for college, it’s still sunny and 90 degrees outside, so a pair of gloves would be sitting near the back of the closet. However, as the season changes, you may reach for those gloves frequently and recycle them into your routine. **But with this, don’t fool yourself.** If you have always owned a pair of gloves but never used them, that pair of gloves is clutter that is wasting valuable space.

“Do you need it?” may sound similar to the above question, however, it differs greatly. The question **“Do you use it?”** requires that item to either be in your current favorite routine. **“Do you need it?”** asks if you will need this item in the future, even if it is not something you commonly use. Think about a suit — it’s likely you rarely wore this suit throughout high school. **However, having a suit in your closet is a necessity for many different situations like an interview or a formal business event.** It’s necessary for weddings, funerals, photos and dances. Although you may not use this suit often, it’s still vital to pack.



Photo courtesy of The Spruce

When deciding where to cut down on clothing, Wand recommends bringing only one season of clothing at a time if your schedule allows. **“If you know you are heading home for the holidays, leave the next season of clothing at home,” She said.** Leave your heavier winter clothing at home and bring a few heavier items, and exchange them when you return home for a holiday break.

Additionally, when packing, there are many items that lose their functionality over time and become clutter. **“Items that have no functionality, such as clothes that no longer fit people, take up the majority of their closet space,” Wand said.** Clothing pieces that are too large or small for you will just sit in the back of your closet, unused for the foreseeable future. When you have a dorm with such little space, these items must remain at home. They will block you from being able to purchase goods that will actually become part of your routine in the future.

The Organization Process



Photo courtesy of The Container Store

As dorm closets are notoriously tiny, organization is key. The standard dorm closet is a tall cabinet with only one clothing rack and two drawers below it, so deciding how to organize your dorm room closet is essential. If you make use of the rack and the drawers like you would at home, you will run out of space quickly. There will be a lot of wasted room, both horizontal and vertical. Through a strategy, this space can be maximized.

“When organizing something as tall as a dorm closet, it is important to make use of the vertical space,” Wand said. **“Hang over-the-door organizers on both sides of the closet to give yourself more space.”** Wand recommends a [simple shoe organizer](#), but don’t let the name fool you. **“This organizer can be used for shoes, but also items such as jewelry and other accessories.”** Additionally, add a [compact hanging organizer](#) inside of your closet on the rack. If you place this organizer in between clothing items, it will add a sense of division and visual organization to the closet.



Photo courtesy of The Container Store

While you are making the most of your vertical space, **don't forget to also make the most of your horizontal space.** Wand recommends adding [small bins](#) to the bottom of the closet to utilize space that would otherwise collect dust. Additionally, add [drawer organizers](#) to any drawers within your dorm room to separate them into smaller, more useful compartments.

With that, Wand suggests purchasing organizers only after you move into your dorm room. **She advised that people moving in alone for the first time tend to over-purchase items, such as organizers.** Students should wait until they have a feel for what they need before purchasing any organizational tools. **“We live in the digital age now, everything is very accessible. Just wait until you find what you personally need, then you can purchase online easily,”** She said.

The organizational process can be intimidating, especially when you are in a new city in a new state while also moving into your first dorm room. While there is a lot to unpack from boxes, be patient. **“When you feel overwhelmed by clutter, oftentimes you don't know where to start so you don't do anything at all,”** said Wand. She recommends people start small, such as with a sock drawer. **“It doesn't have to be perfect but even small progress will feel good.”**

Learning how to organize a dorm room closet can be difficult, but the task has been accomplished by thousands of people per year. If you follow the advice given above, your likeliness of success will increase significantly.

To contact Tina Wand or learn more about Simply Organized by Tina, LLC, visit her website [here](#).